

*Ontario,*  
Wolfe Island, September 22, 1893.

John Davis, Fisherman.

Thos. Keyes, formerly fisherman, now keeps  
restaurant.

Alexander M<sup>^</sup>Flarren, hotel keeper, also fisher-  
man, and handles many fish.

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These men were all interested in preserv-  
ing the fisheries for the sake of attracting  
anglers.

Black bass is the most valuable fish taken  
about here by anglers. They are caught from  
the end of June to the first of September.  
Not many taken in June. They spawn the last  
of May and first part of June.

Mr. Davis did not fish his hoop nets this  
year later than May 24, and took no bass in  
them.

No bass are ever taken in hoop nets until  
the last of the spring season, when the water  
becomes dirty, and the fish cannot see far.

Very few would be taken in the hoop nets anyway and last of May would be the only time they would so take them.

Begin to put down hoop nets to some extent the middle of October, and they are generally taken up about May 1. Some may be left down to about May 24.

In the hoop nets take mainly bullheads, with sunfish and perch. Sometimes a cusk and Amia; a few bass late in May, and eels in May.

They are set in 6 to 10 feet water, muddy bottoms, in bays where there are sheltered, marshy places, at mouths of creeks, etc.

The wings of the hoop nets may be said to average about a rod long each. The mouth measures  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 feet in diameter, and the body of the net is from 8 to 10 feet long. This is as large as they make them in this region.

They think that one cause of the increase of bass is the catching in the hoop nets of

many fishes which eat the spawn of the bass. The Amia are very bad in this particular and abundant. The bass may also move around and occupy different places in greater abundance in different years.

The proper use of hoop nets in this district instead of being harmful to the bass, would be of benefit to that species. The hoop nets should not be left down later than May 1 to 10, and might begin to use them again about October 1. Do not think that 40 hoop nets set in Bayfield Bay from this date on would take any bass. They spawn in that place, but it is not a good bass ground at this season

The mesh of hoop nets measures  $1 \frac{3}{4}$  inches to  $2 \frac{1}{2}$  inches (square) at the mouth, running down to 1 inch (square) at the rear end. They do not take the young of other fishes in these nets to any great extent. The young of other species do not occur in the waters where they are set. The only valuable fish that

might come near the hoop nets would be the bass. The bass, however, are very shy about hoop nets, and bullheads are the only kinds which commonly enter them.

Gill nets are used in this district only during the summer and to a slight extent. Each net measures 8 to 10 rods in length, and is about 4 feet deep. Mesh measures 4 to 4 1/2 inches stretched. Take pike in them, and sometimes suckers, and pickerel (doré). The last are not abundant. Do not take salmon trout or whitefish.

Bass, maskinonge and pike are counted as the sporting fish here. Pickerel are not included in this category.

Bass spawn in shallow places, 6 to 10 feet water, on gravelly bars, etc. The spawning continues to middle of June.

Subsequently they remain during the summer in grassy and rocky places, preferring the latter when the water is warmest.

From the middle to the last of September go off into deeper waters where they spend the winter.

They return some years by the first of May, to some extent, but it is more usually the last of May when they get back into the shallow waters.

Set night lines for sturgeon in this district from first of June to middle of July, but very little of this fishing is done here now. Used to get a good many here. Have seen sturgeon eating salmon trout spawn.

They all believe that there should be a close season to protect the spawning fish, and that the regulations in this respect should be strictly enforced.

As to bass, think it would be safe enough to close the close season by June 15.

The people of this district are not interested in the whitefish and salmon trout fishery.

Many dead "shad" are seen in this district as elsewhere, generally about July 1. Those that die measure 6 to 8 inches long. This same species attains a weight of several pounds, but the larger ones are never seen dead.

Never heard authoritatively of sea salmon in this region.

Not many cusk occur in this district, but the species is abundant out in the lake.

On Wolfe Island there are about 20 men dependent for a living upon net fishing.

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*Chlatis.*

Thomas Dawson, Wolfe Island, Magistrate.

September 22, 1893.

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Has lived here nearly 50 years.

Perhaps 20 men on this island engage entirely in fishing. They use gill nets and hoop nets, and catch mainly bullheads and pike, with a few bass.

Perch, sunfish and rockbass also occur about here.

Pickarel are becoming scarce.

Some whitefish and salmon trout are obtained off the head of the island in the fall. They are taken in gill nets. There is a fishery for the same species at Pigeon Island, about 8 miles from the head of Wolfe Island. Salmon trout are secured there more especially.

The fishermen on Wolfe Island are mainly farmers, who give a part only of their time to fishing. They are all supposed to be provided with a license, but Mr. Dawson, who is opposed

to the Government, asserts that they are not all so supplied, and that they obtain permission from the overseer to some extent illegally, and that politics also help them out. It seems to be a common practice, he says, for favoritism to be shown to certain persons, to the detriment of other and more needy persons, who are kept from fishing, by inability to obtain licenses.

Peter Kiel is the overseer of this district.

Fish have been more abundant this year than for many years. There had previously been a steady decrease in their abundance for a number of years. The past season has been a rainy one, and the water in the lake, etc., has been higher, which may partly account for this present increase.

The catch has actually been higher this year, especially of black bass by sport fishing. Sturgeon are not regularly fished for about



this island, but a few are taken. Used to be much more abundant and larger when he was a boy.

The same as to abundance is also true of the whitefish and salmon trout.

While the coarser fish in this region, including bass, pike, etc., have been more abundant this year than for several previous years, they have not been so abundant as they were 30 and 40 years ago.

Fishing by sportsmen is becoming very important about here, and these men bring in and spend a great deal of money, to the benefit of the natives, who derive a considerable revenue from it. Boarding houses, renting of boats, fishing guides, etc. One American coming here will spend as much money as 10 Canadians, as he is generally much richer and more lavish. Fish chiefly for bass and maskinonge, but also to some extent for sturgeon. It is important to protect the fisheries

which attract such visitors. The market fishermen generally are not of much credit to the village.

Sport fishing began here about 10 years ago, and has increased in amount every since. There is better sport fishing here than among the Thousand Islands, being nearer the head of the lake, and many men come down from those islands to enjoy the sport here.

The market fishermen, however, thinks that the Government has gone too far in restricting the net fishing, which does not take the fish sought by the anglers, nor interfere with them.

By increase of gill nets more bass would be secured by the net fishermen, but they are not taken in hoop nets.

Pike are getting scarce about here. When he was a boy, about 40 years ago, pike and pickerel abounded to a greater extent than bass. Now the latter is many times more common.

August is the best month for still fishing for bass with live bait, and for trolling.

Bass have done spawning by June 15.

There is a disposition on the part of some sportsmen to go to the fishing grounds very early, even the first part of June, but fishing generally does not begin until about July 1.

(Next year the Canadian law will not permit bass fishing before that time.)

Spoke of the arrest of two American yacht skippers who came over and fished in Canadian waters last spring for bass without first obtaining permit. The overseer, however, settled with them on the payment of a certain amount which he pocketed. Spoke of this as a case of blackmail, which should not be tolerated

Complaints have been made to the Government that more hoop nets are set in this district than are accounted for by the overseer. They have obtained no satisfaction thereby, and it is understood that this over allowance has

been allowed for political reasons.

About 20 hoop nets are set about Wolfe Island, generally at the outlets of streams running down into or through marshes, etc.

The season is March, April and to some extent May, in the spring, and November, and December, being finally fished under the ice. They are set in 4 to 8 feet water.

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John Olsen, Kingston, Ontario.

September 22, 1893.

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Fish dealer. Has been here 13 years.

Came over from Norway.

Buys whitefish caught around Millhaven and Bath, Ontario.

Buys pike caught in the Rideau, and also along the lake front.

Buys perch, bass, pickerel; caught all along the lake front.

Buys some eels in spring and fall.

Buys bullheads, caught mostly in hoop nets some in gill nets, in the streams, and to some extent along the lake front.

The pike and pickerel are mostly taken in gill nets.

Bass taken mostly by hook and line and by trolling.

Whitefish are taken altogether in gill nets, they will not take the hook. Bass are

often taken incidentally in the same gill nets.

Take only bullheads in the hoop nets.

Never heard of bass or any other species being taken in this manner.

More pike are taken in gill nets in the neighborhood of Gananoque than about here.

This year it has been his experience that all fish have been pretty scarce in Lake Ontario.

Very seldom are salmon trout taken in Lake Ontario at this end. Some few are obtained in Bay of Quinté. They used to be abundant in the lake, and he formerly got many from this source. They have generally been caught in gill nets about Salmon Island, which is named from them, but he believes they do not take many there now. They also used to be taken incidentally with whitefish in gill nets. The mesh was too small, but they would become tangled up in the net. Salmon Island was formerly the best place for catching them.

He still gets some very good whitefish and salmon trout from Lake Ontario, but the most of these species which he sells are obtained from more western lakes.

Thinks that whitefish have decreased in abundance in Lake Ontario, but cannot see but that they are as large now as ever.

Ciscoe herring used to be caught in Kingston Bay and at Bath, in gill nets, through the ice in winter. During the past year or two they have secured very few in those places, but they are still being taken around Belleville.

He obtains very few maskalonge caught about Kingston.

Sturgeon are caught about here mostly in the winter. Caught only occasionally in the summer. They range now in size from 15 to 35 pounds. Heard of one formerly which weighed about 75 pounds. The catch is considerable. He sells some here, but the most are shipped to the Buffalo Fish Co., and to New York. He

acts as an agent for the former. Cannot say whether they have decreased in abundance.

Never receives cusk for sale.

Never heard of sea salmon up here.

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Kingston, Ontario, September 22, 1893.

Thomas Merritt, Fishery Overseer for Kingston, Storrington and Pittsburg.

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His territory covers a length of about 25 miles, down from the foot of Amherst Island. Has lived in Kingston 33 years. There was very little net fishing in the days when he first came here.

There are 2 men in Barryfield who use hoop nets in the Rideau River and lakes. The season is October 1 to April 1, but they do not necessarily fish all of this time. There are 2 other men, 1 mile up the Rideau from the above place, who fish in that River below Kingston Mills. These 4 men have licenses for 10 hoop nets altogether. They catch in them bullheads, pike, suckers and eels. They also use gill nets for pike. They are licensed to use 200 rods of gill nets between them. They sell their catch to the Lake Ontario Fish Co.,

which has an office in Kingston.

The remainder of the net fishermen worked on the inland lakes. There were no net fishermen on the Lake Ontario front of this district in 1892, and only one in 1893. See 2nd page beyond.

Bass can go up the Rideau from Lake Ontario, 4 miles, where the first locks occur. They are known to spawn in these 4 miles. They begin to spawn about April 10 to 15, and the season closes by the end of May. It is over long before June 15, when the Canada close season has terminated <sup>is</sup> ~~th~~s far.

There is much sewage in the Rideau derived from Kingston, and bass do not resort to it now as much as formerly.

Bullheads devour bass spawn in large quantities. He has seen them eating it. They will take all the eggs out of a nest at a single gulp. The bullheads will drive the parent bass away, and the latter appear to be

afraid of them, although daring and ever ready to defend their eggs. Bullheads are on the increase.

Bass also spawn along the Lake Ontario front of the district, on muddy and gravelly shoals. Larger bass resort to these places than to the creeks. There is one important spawning ground within a stone's throw of the Military College, located just below Kingston.

As soon as the water gets cold in this region, about the middle of September, the bass retire into deeper water and remain there until spring. There are no bass in the Rideau during winter. Can catch bass at this season in deep water with bait. This fishing is good, and it may continue so from now until the ice forms.

Thinks that the presence and abundance of bullheads are partly responsible for the decrease of bass.

In 1893, there was one man using 3 hoop

nets about 9 miles up the lake front, in Collins Bay. He is also allowed to use them in a little creek between Kingston and that place, He is the only market fisherman on the lake front in this district. Catches chiefly bullheads and eels. The nets are set in 2 to 8 or 10 feet water. The leaders to these nets average about 50 feet long on each side. The opening is about  $3 \frac{1}{2}$  to 4 feet in diameter. The length of the net 20 to 25 feet. This applies to all the nets in this district.

Two farmers have been licensed to employ short gill nets to obtain fish for their own use, but the amount of fish taken by them would amount to nothing. He knows that one of these men has not used his nets this season, being able to secure all the fish he needs by hook and line.

Has never heard of the capture of bass, whitefish, or salmon trout in hoop nets along

the lake front. Bass are cautious and turn away from a leader when they meet it. They will not pass along the leader into the net.

Gives the general habits of bass in this region as follows:

After spawning they go to rocky bottoms in shoal water where they remain about 6 weeks; that is to about July 15. They then resort to weedy bottoms, where they remain about 6 weeks longer, subsequently returning to the rocky places, where they remain until about the middle of September, when the water cools up, and they take to deeper localities. The rocky places are very rough spots, with many large boulders, etc.

Except for the waters in the immediate vicinity of Kingston, which are greatly polluted by city sewage, he is confident that bass are as abundant now as they have been at any time during the past 25 years.

Salmon trout and whitefish do not properly belong to this district.

This is also not much of a ground for maskalonge, but he does not know that they are any less abundant now than they used to be.

Pike are very much on the increase, which he thinks is very unfortunate.

Pickerel are about as common as they used to be.

There is no fishery for sturgeon in this district, and never has been. He has, however, seen them jumping when out on the water. Some fishing for them is carried on in the Wolfe Island District.

15 to 18 years ago he remembers catching 30 herring off a wharf in the city. Now on account of the pollution they wont approach the city.

"Shad" or "menhaden" grow to be about 6 inches long, when they die. They occur and die in immense numbers in this district. They come in dense schools. Do not fish for them. They are sometimes seen in the winter under

the ice, when they also die, but their chief season is the spring and summer. Has seen them as early as May, when they have at times been so thick that he could scarcely put an oar down through them. They continue to occur so abundantly up to the end of July. They have not been so common this year, and not many dead ones were observed. He has noticed them during only about the last 10 years. The greater number of deaths (height of mortality) is in July. Has talked with Seth Green about them. The latter thought they resulted from plantings made by himself. Thought they were menhaden, the spawn having been sent to him mixed with shad spawn. His plantings were made in the Oswego River. The last one about 2 years before he died. Mr. Merritt said that these fish invariably had a red spot appear on their sides just before dying. This fish is not regarded as good eating here.

June and August are the best months for

fishing for bass with fly in this region.

They occur on the rocky bottoms at this time, and feed then on crayfishes and on the grub of the drakefly (May fly?).

There is no need of extending the close season for bass to June 30. June 15 will protect them amply.

When on the reedy bottoms, July mainly, they will not take the fly. Does not know what they feed on then.

Perch are growing more plentiful every year, and are very destructive to fish fry of all kinds. This is the yellow perch. It is as greedy as the pike, but the latter consumes larger fish..

In the early spring, or as soon as the ice is out, the pike resort to the marshes in this district, and often go abundantly into water so shallow that the tops of their backs stick out. At this season they are shot and speared.



Several are sometimes killed at a single shot.

Never heard of sea salmon up here in  
River.

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